

CITY OF NEWARK, NJ'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Ronald Marshall -- August 9, 1996

Q: Today is August 9, 1996. I'm here with Dr. Ronald Marshall for an interview for the Krueger-Scott Mansion Oral History Project. My name is Bill May. Your name is.

Marshall: My name is Ronald H. Marshall. The H stands actually for Herbert.

Q: Okay. After all of these years I finally found out. And your date of birth?

Marshall: Date is May 20, 1943.

Q: And your place of birth?

Marshall: Place of birth is Newark, New Jersey. I was born in Beth Israel Hospital on Lyons Avenue.

Q: And for the people who are listening to the tapes. There really are two people here even though we sound so much alike. And your current occupation?

Marshall: Current occupation, I'm a dentist.

Q: Did you have an occupation, something before becoming a dentist?

Marshall: Well actually I didn't have an occupation. I've always worked and to become a dentist and to pay for an education, you have to work. So therefore I did a little bit of everything. I've been an apprentice model maker for toy company which was actually a tool and dye type of a trade located in Harrison. I also used to work, shape up for the breweries of Newark. Ballantine Ale and Pabst Blue Ribbon. Also drove Good Humor trucks here on, used to be based off of

Sixteenth Avenue in Newark. I used to work at Fischer Bakeries in Newark on Tenth Street. I used to work downtown Newark at the clothing stores such as Lincoln Road Men's Shop, Cromwell's, Heaven on Earth, Ohrbach's, Bamberger's. And approximately that's about it. I mean, I've done everything. In fact, I used to work at Woolworth's up at Irvington Center there. And I also used to deliver papers down on the Seventeenth Avenue projects.

Q: So these were all things that you did while you were a student working your way through dental school?

Marshall: Well, not actually working through dental school. Actually just working just to survive in the different schools.

Q: You alluded to or you talked about, and this is something about your education. We know from what you said that you're a doctor of dental medicine. But could you back up and give us a little bit of a sense of your schooling leading up to becoming a doctor of dental medicine.

Marshall: In reference to what, the courses, or in reference to?

Q: In the schooling in Newark, what school in Newark?

Marshall: Okay. Actually what happened in Newark, I attended, well I should start off with elementary school. And I think the first elementary school I attended was Bergen Street Elementary School, and then I moved and I went to Avon Avenue Elementary School. And from there I attended junior high at Clinton Place Junior High School a few years after they had opened up. Then something very strange happened. I was supposed to attend Wickwake High School; however, due to the influx I guess of so many blacks at the time, they hadn't changed the school districts. So they kind of missed my block in a way, and we went to Southside High School. As a matter of fact, you attended there with me.

Q: Absolutely.

Marshall: Better known as, I think it's Shabazz right now. Because at that time it was a funny thing too because what happened was I came back from Vietnam and for the kinds in Newark, he had this black and gold jacket on that had Shabazz on it. I said what school is that? Shabazz, man, Shabazz, man. What are you talking about? Southside. Oh, oh yeah. That's my old alma mater. I went there. I didn't realize it at that time. But those are the schools I did attend. And after that, like I said, I worked and I graduated out of high school in 1964. Thought I may go to college. All my friends went away to Howard and other schools, and at the time, I was still working trying to send myself to school. And I wound up going to Howard University in Washington, D.C. And I was very high, and at the time was like very, it was a [?] at the time, let's put it that way. We were dealing with, when I got to be two years there with people like Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown, and I had a lot to do with SNICKS, Student Non-Violent Coordination, and we had our office downstairs the student union. And at that time Howard was considered part of the Howard University Black Leaders. And the people then, they didn't take too well with our Afro [voice too low to heard] But a lot of changes were made. The president of the University was Nabart at the time. He wasn't used to the change, and he wanted to keep me for kind of my little life, the riots were working out at the time. So there were a lot of changes that I saw happen, to tell you that happened, and being the places I was living at, something was always happening. Like I left in 1967-68 and flew to Newark and then the riots broke out in Newark at that particular time. And some of my good friends were instrumental in, you know, meeting us through the troubled times. People such as, at that time, Sirroca, were instrumental in trying to help people get through the times in Newark. There were certain things, and I think that later on we had moved to.

Q: Continuing. Continuing with your education.

Marshall: Well, continuing. Education meaning that there are two types of education. One that you learn from a book and one socially. Okay. And, you know, and at the time I was getting quite

an education both ways. One, learning how to deal with people. As a matter of fact, in 1967 after I came back to Newark, I was drafted again for the second time. Upon which I went to, was drafted into the Marine Corps for a couple of years. So between 1968 and 70, the times of a lot of assassinations, King and others, I had missed out on those and I was away at the time. However, when I returned back in 1970 from Vietnam, I had lived in Northbrook which is on Lincoln Avenue which is another historical point because there were certain towers that were going up and down the street from my house that never went up. And tanks were being driven through to make sure that these towers never went up. Okay? But, at that time, I then started to attend Rutgers and worked downtown Newark at a place called Lincoln Roads Men's Shop. I also, so I was working in between classes going to Rutgers. I attended, you know, as a matter of fact, a lot of the classes that I was attending were down on Rutgers Street there and up on University Avenue near High Street. I attended Rutgers for two and a half years and finished up my sciences, which I only majored in the sciences. I had finished up my liberal arts at Howard. Upon which, after that, I had moved to a place called Wallington, and I had moved out of Newark again because I wanted to be close to the school because I attended Fairleigh Dickinson University. So I haven't seen or lived in Newark since, I've seen Newark but I haven't lived in Newark actually since 19, I would say seventy, it would have to be around 74, 1974. That's approximately the last time, I mean, you know, if you have any other questions about that. I mean, I can relate on instances, you know, that are past that, yeah, but.

Q: We'll come to those on some of the other questions. You're married. I know that you're married cause I was around. Could you tell us who you're married to?

Marshall: I'm married to a young lady that as a matter of fact I met in 1968 in Newark at a party. This is prior to the time I went in service, in the service. Her name is Yvonne Byers, B Y E R S. And she's originally and her family's originally from, actually I think her father's from the south and her mother is from Newark, and they lived in a place called Vauxhall.

Q: And what year was that that you married?

Marshall: I got married in nineteen, oh God, 69.

Q: Okay. What kind of work was Yvonne doing at that time when you met her?

Marshall: When I first met her, she was a, she was working for Bell Telephone. And she was a stenographer for Bell Telephone. And she was working at 540 Broad Street in Newark.

Q: And you have two children, right?

Marshall: Yes. I have two children now. I have my daughter, Nicole, who's all ready to turn 17.

Q: When was she born?

Marshall: She was born in 1979. Okay? And she was born actually at St. Barnabas up in Livingston.

Q: And your son?

Marshall: And my son Jarrod was born right here in New Brunswick in 1984.

Q: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about the family background. Your father's name is?

Marshall: My father's name is Frank Marshall and he's a [?]. And I have a brother who's also a [?].

Q: Where was your father born?

Marshall: My father was born in Virginia.

Q: Do you know when your father came to Newark?

Marshall: Actually, I don't the exact year, but I would have to say it has to be in the, well, if I was born in 46 in Newark, my brother was also born in Newark, it had to have been in the early 39, 40.

Q: And what about your mother? Her name?

Marshall: Her name is Rosemary. Okay.

Q: Her maiden name?

Marshall: DeWitt.

Q: Okay. And then she became Rosemary Marshall.

Marshall: Exactly.

Q: And she was born where?

Marshall: I'm really not sure. What happened my mother died when I was about six months old so I really didn't know her. She had died of tuberculosis. At that time, a lot of people did.

Q: So you have a brother Frank, and he's Frank the third, Frank Marshall III.

Marshall: Frank Marshall the third, yes.

Q: And you mentioned he was born in Newark, and again, what year?

Marshall: 1943.

Q: What was your father's occupation?

Marshall: My father's occupation was a postal clerk. And he worked downtown James Street there for years and years and years at the post office, main post office downtown.

Q: Did you know him to have any other occupations besides working at the post office.

Marshall: No. He had various sideline, but other than that, no, that was his primary work. He worked at night too.

Q: Do you know what he did before he came to Newark?

Marshall: No. I don't.

Q: Do you know if he served in the Army?

Marshall: He served in the Army, and he was in World War II.

Q: You haven't changed your name at all over these years?

Marshall: No. I haven't changed my name to any type of Muslim or African because, you know, I haven't, you know, changed it at all. I feel like a name is a name. Okay? It's the person behind the name.

Q: Did you ever think about changing your name when you were in D.C. at Howard involved with the?



Marshall: No. I never thought about changing my name. As a matter of fact, I was hoping that I'd remember my name.

Q: Okay, you were born in Newark, Ron, and do you, what are your earliest memories of where you lived in Newark?

Marshall: Okay. I lived in the Prudential apartments. I really don't.

Q: Sorry to interrupt you but where are the Prudential Apartments?

Marshall: Prudential Apartments were the first black apartments actually in Newark. And, as people said projects or whatever they want to call them. They were very nice apartments down on, right by Spruce Street and Montgomery.

Q: Somerset Street.

Marshall: Somerset, yes, exactly. I don't remember. I had a lot of relatives at the time that were living there. So, therefore, I used to go see my aunts there. My father had like four sisters and one brother. So, you know, and they all lived down there at the time. So, you know, every time I turned around I was there. But I don't actually remember. My first recollection, I remember living, matter of fact, on Belmont Avenue, then we moved on Ridgewood Avenue, and then I lived on Belmont Avenue, 458, now that the memory kicks in, you know. For some reason, down from Pyrayes, you know. Matter of fact, Dr. Dawson lived right around the corner from me.

Q: What is Pyrayes's?

Marshall: Pyrayes's was a field, and it was some type of. I'm trying to remember actually what it was. It was some type of factory over off of, down near Southside, off of, I think it was Alpine, West Runyon. And it was a field and a playground, and I'm trying to remember what Pyrayes.



Some type of, I'm not sure it was a beverage, or some type of company.

Q: Do you know, remember how to spell it? Because we were little kids then.

Marshall: I think it's P Y R, maybe A, Y E S, or something like that. You know. I remember seeing it across the top of, at that time they did these big illuminated like type neon signs. But it was in red, and I think it was a white building. I'm not even sure whether it's still there, or whatever, probably. Do you remember?

Q: No. But I never heard of Pyrares. I think. I'll have to kick back in my memory bank.

Marshall: Because there was a baseball field right near there off West Runyon and Belmont Avenue.

Q: I'm wondering if you're, there is something located there now. The school, Belmont, Runyon School and it's right by the entrance to Route 78. And I'm wondering if that's the area you're talking about, because that is West Runyon Street and Belmont.

Marshall: It probably, you're probably. It has to be. But, you know, it has to be. But at that time, coming through, you could take Belmont Avenue right over to almost Watson Avenue.

Q: Absolutely.

Marshall: And now I cut through there, and, you know, it's just concrete. You know, who put this here? You know. And I know that area pretty well. And I used to live like 458, like, matter of fact if I could ever contact Dr. Dawson they would know too because they lived right around the corner from there at the time.

Q: GP is one of Dr. Dawson's sons?

Marshall: Right.

Q: The oldest son?

Marshall: The oldest son.

Q: The oldest son. He's upstate New York someplace now isn't he?

Marshall: Yes. I believe. I haven't spoken to him in quite a while. And Danny is still, you probably find him once a while in Newark.

Q: That's Dr. Dawson's younger, Danny Dawson, photographer and filmmaker and so forth. Do you remember how long you stayed in the Prudential Apartments there in Newark?

Marshall: I think I was probably only there for maybe, you know, it had to pre-school, so, therefore, probably only about two, three years.

Q: And the address 458 Belmont, how long?

Marshall: 458, we stayed there, I stayed there until, oh, let's see. It has to be, probably moved there in 1950, probably stayed there about four or five years. And then in 1954, after we moved up to Seymour Avenue.

Q: Before we talk about Seymour Avenue and some of your impressions of the area, I want to back you up a bit. Because we talked about the family background, and we talked about your father coming up from Virginia, and then we talked about your first housing in the Prudential Apartments. You mentioned your aunts. These were all your father's sisters?

Marshall: Right.

Q: How many are they, and did they all come up from Virginia at the same time? Or did your father get here first?

Marshall: Well, yes. I think they were, well, yes. It's hard to say. You know, because people tell you what they want you to hear. And you have to realize that. You have to be able to analyze, you know. And the names change, you know, and like, you know, the Cardwells, the Queens, there's the Wilsons. And what happens is that you don't really know who's who and where they came from and what time. I do realize that my father and even my grandmother have a market at 24 Parker Street. There was something going on, but I have no idea. You know, and they didn't tell me. And my father was still at the point, I know at one point he was attending high school. Now whether he graduated or not, I don't know. At Southside. And they all went to Southside. But he was taking care of all of them. He was the oldest, so he was taking care of his sisters and his brothers for a while.

Q: So it sounds like your father was in Newark --

Marshall: Right.

Q: Then he went back to Virginia.

Marshall: No. That's not correct. He was in Newark, and he did not go back to Virginia.

Q: He never went back.

Marshall: Yeah. Right.

Q: Never go back. But he was here in Newark. Just for the record, can you, there were four aunts.

Marshall: Three aunts, I'm sorry.

Q: Three aunts. Okay. Just for the record, could you just state their names.

Marshall: As you say, aunt or aunt, let's. Depending on which. For those who like aunt. There's my Aunt Sandy, my Aunt Rose.

Q: Okay. Last names.

Marshall: Cardwell.

Q: All of them?

Marshall: Yes. No, not.

Q: I'm sorry to interrupt you. But could you back up and give the first name and last name.

Marshall: Okay. Let's start with. Fine, let's start with Aunt Sandra Cardwell. Okay?

Q: Then the other one.

Marshall: Helen Queen. And the other one was Rose Wilson.

Q: Okay. You left 358 Belmont.

Marshall: Four.

Q: What?

Marshall: 458.

Q: 458. I don't know why I, but it was Belmont. And you moved to Seymour Avenue. Where on Seymour Avenue did you live?

Marshall: We moved up on Seymour Avenue, and at the time we were actually the first, well, actually, I would say first actual blacks going over there. After an interracial couple. But this was 58 Seymour Avenue and that would be located in the Springfield section, located between Madison and Clinton.

Q: What was your first impression of the place?

Marshall: It was like dying and going to heaven.

Q: Okay. How old were you?

Marshall: I was, at the time, I would say, this is 1954, so I was maybe around eight.

Q: And what was, you said it was like dying and going to heaven. How did it compare to Belmont Avenue or the Prudential apartments?

Marshall: Well, it was different. Okay. We lived in, let's put it this way, we lived in what we call, it was a three family house. I mean it was a six and a half room apartment. I mean, I'd never seen a glass shower stall, or wood carved around the windows, and, you know, what do you call them, French doors, pocket doors, you know, a balcony. It was a dishwasher. Certain things like that. So, you know, it was like luxuries.

Q: How did you get that apartment? You, your father and your brother.

Marshall: It was me, my father, and my brother. How did we get it? I have no idea. You know, my father, you know, was working at the Post Office. And I remember him saying, it's super expensive, super expensive, but he wanted us boys to get a good education, and he was going to move us to make sure we got a good education at a good school. And at the time, it was mostly, I guess, Jewish, Jewish neighborhood. Super expensive. And at that time, it was probably a hundred twenty-five or a hundred seventy-five a month.

Q: Okay. About 1954 or something like that. Tell me more about the neighborhood. What kind of shops and businesses? There were no factories in the area. I know that.

Marshall: No. There were no factories in the area. Matter of fact, there was, of course, you had, there was an area that, the shops were, you had a lot of mom and pop little shops. Okay? And at that time, regular little butcher back on Bergen Street, the marketplace, up Wickwake section, Clinton Hill section. You had butcher shops you could go to. They had little grocery stores. You had a deli, Lipschitz. You had, let's see, you had, if I remember, a Foodtown at the time. You had a whole bunch.

Q: These stores are mostly on Clinton Avenue, Bergen Street.

Marshall: Yeah. Mostly on Clinton Avenue and Bergen Street. You know, mostly Jews owned and operated them at the time.

Q: And you settled there because your father wanted a good neighborhood with good schools for you and Frank the third. After that did you live anyplace else in Newark while growing up?

Marshall: Actually no. After that, we, matter of fact, that was the primary residence after that. There was no other place except for when I had left and came back and lived in North Newark when I was attending Rutgers.

Q: Now, you mentioned the shops and the stores. Where did your father do the shopping for the family?

Marshall: Okay. We used to, we did the shopping with a combination of things. Of course, at that time they still hadn't have food services, where they book you in. Then we used to go down, and I'm trying to remember the place. It was right by Belmont Avenue, and Milford Avenue. Yes. And there's a meat market and deli and everything right there on Clinton Avenue, and we would go in there.

Q: Which one, on Clinton and Bergen.

Marshall: No. This was one that was located between, right across from the park, between Milford and Belmont, right there. And it was a butcher shop right across from the little park there. You know, you had Trinity Methodist.

Q: He was several blocks down the hill.

Marshall: Right. And he had an account there, I guess, with this guy. He used to go in and get. This guy had good meat, he would go in there. This is prior even to Randy's Meat Market and Bergen and all this other that you were alluding to. No. This was prior to this. Go ahead.

Q: I was just going to ask you. The shop where he got his meat. Was it black owned?

Marshall: Nathan. All Jewish.

Q: Did he patronize any businesses that were black owned? Do you remember back then?

Marshall: The barbershop.



Q: Oh the barbershop. Now where was that barbershop located? Where was that barbershop?

Marshall: Well, you know, I really. I'm trying to remember which ones he went to. Cause I remember going to Ronald Rice's down on [?] Street. His father's barbershop. His father's barbershop down on Ashley Street. But we went to a barbershop on Kenney, actual location, I think it was down by, on Waverley Avenue or? I'm trying to remember where the heck the barbershop was. I can't remember where. We used to go somewhere to get a haircut. Oh, no, now I remember. It was on Pershine, the corner of Pershine Avenue and Madison.

Q: Pershine and Madison.

Marshall: A black barbershop down there.

Q: Remember the name of it?

Marshall: I can't remember the name. If I think hard enough or long enough and if the rolladex is long enough, I might be able to get the dust off and think of it.

Q: So you were going back down into, quotes to the Central Ward, for your barber, your haircuts.

Marshall: Well, I wouldn't. It was only four blocks away and that wasn't really considered the Central Ward.

Q: But you were heading back in that direction.

Marshall: But I was heading back down.

Q: Cross.

Marshall: Right.

Q: And the Ron Rice you mention. This is the Ron Rice who's also the Newark City councilman and state senator. He moved on to your block after.

Marshall: Right. Ron moved up on Seymour Avenue. Let's see. I would have to say. It would have to be, I think it was, maybe it was junior high, it would have to be when I was in junior high. Somewhere around there. Eighth, ninth grade or something like that when he moved on Seymour Avenue.

Q: Maybe a little bit sooner. Cause you had been playing the violin.

Marshall: Right. Maybe it was sooner. [cross talk] It had to be about sixth or seventh grade. Sixth or seventh grade. Okay. So I met after that, probably. I remember that.

Q: How, did you go shopping or your brother Frank go shopping with your father at that time to the meat market or wherever else he went?

Marshall: Yes we did.

Q: How were you treated? How did you feel being in those places.

Marshall: Well, you know when you're young, you really don't pay attention. I was treated, you know, fine okay. And my father was always low key, you know, and very mannerable. So I guess, you know, like everybody seemed to like him. And there were no, you know, no problems.

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Q: Working at the post office.

Marshall: Working at the post office at the time. But he learned how to deal with a lot of different type of ethnic groups. I remember him many a time saying though that, that whatever I do and if I ever go to the store by myself, he always beat it into my head, that you know how much money you gave the man, and count it in your hand and make sure that we come back with the right change or you're going back to the store. That I also. And I would go around the corner to the store on Paterson where the column was started. And he, this guy down there, he never had an adding machine, you know, he used to do it all in his head. Whatever. And I would always question him how much each thing was. And I used to make him write it on the bag. Cause at that time it was the pencil and the brown paper bag. And then, you know, I'd give him the money, and then count the change back to me. You know, take it back home. Then my father would question me, quizz me. So to this day, people use adding machines, I still do sums in my head because of things like that.

Q: You mentioned that the only black business was the barbershop.

Marshall: Right.

Q: And the other businesses that you dealt with, what was the ethnicity or the race of the persons who owned these businesses?

Marshall: Well, at that particular time, you have to realize there weren't that many black owned businesses in Newark. Okay? Except for barbershops. And if you know anything about black history, if you owned a barbershop or, you know, hair dressing salon or something like that, that this is the only real businesses that were. I mean, there weren't too many people like Ron's grandfather, like, that had like oil burner businesses. He was one of the first blacks around that had his own truck with, had, you know, oil burner, delivered oil to people's houses and everything. And that was considered a good job. My father was lucky.

Q: So that, was that his business or was that his job?

Marshall: That was his business.

Q: Was this in Newark?

Marshall: This was actually in Vauxhall.

Q: Oh Vauxhall.

Marshall: You know. There were some black owned bars. Okay? You know, that people Don Newcomb or other people at the time. I'm trying to remember over on Springfield or Waverly that most of inter-city was, down on Prince Street, the bakeries, or all that you would even go it, mostly were Jewish owned businesses. Newark, you have to realize, Newark was predominantly Jewish and Italian at that particular time. And you take the west side of Newark, that was predominantly Italian. And so, therefore, it was a sub-culture. They had many little sub-cultures set up in Newark. And the section I was living in was predominantly a Jewish neighborhood. So therefore, it was Jewish people that were working together, and they were owning the businesses, owning the housing, and renting out the housing at the time. Even the landlord was Jewish. So it was, I got to know Jewish people very, very well. You know. Some were good. Some weren't so good. Some exploited the area, some didn't exploit the area. To say that they all did wouldn't be correct. But a majority of them did. Okay?

Q: Did any of these businesses employ any blacks or any people of other ethnic or racial groups?

Marshall: Yes. Most of these businesses did employ blacks. However, they had to be a special type of black. Okay? And meaning that they would have to be able to be, okay. Or, if in order to carry groceries and get the money and get the pay, you would have a lot of blacks that were, you know, that would be behind the scenes, like at Woolworth's or something like that. Cleaning up behind, in the kitchen. And they were menial jobs, okay. They were, you know, but at that time you were lucky to have a job so whether it be menial or not, you know, it was a job. The blacks

mainly they were, you know, they were, a lot of them worked for companies okay down in Newark. Okay? This was like, you know, these were people that used to work for like places like Breyers and Ballantine and, you know, but at that time too, you know, these were set aside for middle class, blue collar workers. And there were strong unions in Newark at the time. And these unions wouldn't let you in. And I can remember quite a few instances when I was. Well, let's, I mean, all the jobs I had, I was one of the few blacks in that particular position. And it wasn't by chance, it was by choice.

Q: Was there any resentment, did you sense any resentment against the stores in your neighborhood not owned by blacks? And I ask this question and I'd like you to think in terms of that you moved to Seymour Avenue in about 1954 and you lived there essentially until about 1964, so that ten year period and maybe a few years after while you were in school and back and forth. Because there was a changing community. So could you give us a sense, did you sense any resentment? And also how did the neighborhood change in your view? What did you see in the changes in relationship to other things that we've talked about here?

Marshall: Well, the neighborhood. Okay, well what was happening is that there was a. Let's start off, let's start off with the neighborhood itself. Okay. Let's start off with the housing. The housing started to change because there's a loss of interest by the owners. Okay? And the owners being Jewish. They were moving further out north, west, whatever you want to say. So therefore they weren't, they were raising the rents, taking the money, and not doing what they should be doing as far as upkeep of the property. There was a bigger, I noticed a bigger migration of blacks that were coming in from, not only Central Ward, but from the south. And they were coming in and moving in. Okay? So I was noticing that there was, the shops were slowly starting to close. There wasn't many. Services were started to decline. The quality of food and services were at the point where people were getting a little bitter due to the, you know, hey I paid for this and now you're charging me more and I'm getting less. Okay? And it was happening all over Newark. Okay? It was only, not only from Broad Street northward. It was through the Central Ward. But it was also spreading southward, back through down where they call Pennington, East Bound, Iron

Bound section of Newark. People were becoming more protective. Bloomfield Avenue had all of a sudden become more protective. The Italians were becoming more protective of their area. Because they didn't want to lose. Blacks were, too many blacks were coming into the area. I noticed that the school systems were starting to change slightly. They built two junior high schools, modern junior high schools. One was flourishing and the other one wasn't.

Q: What were the two schools?

Marshall: West Kenney Junior High School and Clinton Place Junior High School.

Q: Which was flourishing?

Marshall: Clinton Place Junior High School. And West Kenney was, it was, what they did was, and then they was, maybe about two high schools, same time, same amount of money, designed basically by the same person, and one is falling apart and the other isn't. And you wonder and you say, well, why? Mainly because West Kenney was in the Central Ward.

Q: West Kenney also had a mixed population. White as well as black population. And so that Clinton Place, that's what you're.

Marshall: Exactly.

Q: In this community of transition, and you're describing a somewhat period of decline, did the businesses, did the homes become black owned? Did you have a change of ownership or?

Marshall: Well, faces behind the counter. Very good. Faces behind the counter. Okay? You think faces behind the counter, and that's just all it was. Faces behind the counter. Okay? You see the counter and the face, but that was all that you would see. Cause behind the scenes things were being done that make it look like they're black owned, and this, that and the other. But they



weren't. The housing was still being Jewish owned. They were holding out for high rents. Okay? Or there were houses that, yeah, we're gonna give you or we're gonna let you buy this house. And they were taking back the property. There were certain things that, at the time, you couldn't really understand. You know. And, I mean, you're going through and saying, yeah, blacks are doing better, but they weren't. They really weren't.

Q: Okay, continuing on. Did you belong to a church or were you part of any kind of religious organization?

Marshall: Well, to tell you the truth, at that particular time, nobody knows. In other words, what I was saying is that I was still trying to find myself. So, therefore, I had attended Queen of Angels, you know, Catholic Church down on near Jones Street, Belmont Avenue, whatever you want to call. And I also attended Abyssinian Baptist Church. And also attended.

Q: The one in Newark on West Kenney Street?

Marshall: Yes. And St. Mary's Church, once, twice, that was very enlightening. And also Methodist Church back there on Clinton and Belmont Avenue too. So that was probably the extent of the churches that I attended to. And, you know, had some type of religious background. You know, I, sometimes, I think I should have been involved in more of the churches, but at the time, times were changing and, you know, I didn't know where I was at the time to tell you the truth. And that's about it as far as my religious background.

Q: And how about your social and cultural activities? What did you?

Marshall: Well socially and culturally, I saw a lot of things. My father used to play tennis. So he used to take me to different places in Montclair and up on Morris Road and these couple of tennis partners. And Arthur Ashe was starting out and certain people. I also used to go to many parks in Newark and play ball. And also right down the street, a block down the street, right off Seymour



and Avon Avenue Schools, and there was a guy by the name of Bob Hurt and he was actually into physical education and he also taught at Bergen Street School. And he used to set up recreational activities for us, all of us, I mean for the people around the neighborhood to attend. And what happened was he was always going to New York and, you know, get the guys a little playing over there at the Waverly and down the Village to come over and play basketball. And he used to have people like Alvin Addles and also the Globetrotters come over. This was when Chamberlain was playing at the time. And, you know, he used to keep the lights on till ten, eleven o'clock at night. And, you know, he used to get a little kids, you know, basketball games. Meet a lot of people. Like Mel Lockland and Wilt Chamberlain and there was a bunch of them who used to come over and play. And it was fun. And they used to come over and pick up food, and eat a few hot dogs. And that was fun, and, you know, you'd get a chance to talk to some of the guys. Which gave us something to do at the time. People like Bob Hurt that really put their foot forward to help give us blacks something to do. And it was widely accepted. As far as, you know, anything in baseball. We had out sandlot baseball games and everything else, stick ball. And that was basically it. And, of course, you knew you had during the summer. And that was basically all. Oh, we used to go down to Eighteenth Avenue pool and swim. And that was the main swim hole at the time. You know. And Rotunda I guess was the other one I guess it was. And we used to swim, learn how to swim anyway. And at that time, you had a lot of blacks even swimming, attempting to swim. But that was basically it.

Q: How did you get information, the news and events of the community, the black community? Did you read a black newspaper? What about the radio? What did you listen to on the radio station? What stations were available that told you what was happening in Newark?

Marshall: Well, let me see. I'm trying to remember the radio station. At that time it was WNJR I believe. And WNJR. WBLX, but that came along a little later. And but I think WNJR, and disk jockey Jocko was around at the time. And that was basically it. People weren't heavily, there were some jazz singers, and we used to get all our jazz, and you could go in any house and you'd hear Nancy Wilkins playing you know, the background. And Dina Washington on our record players,

on our 78s. That was real at the time.

Q: Did you read Afro, Afro-American newspapers?

Marshall: Well, the Afro-American newspaper, I think the Amsterdam News was probably, you know, the most, well actually the best form of information that we received. And the other form was Jet. Jet Magazine publications. You'd go to that barbershop. It was sitting right there. And you'd pick it up and you'd start reading it. You know. And it was short, and still to this day, I remember that and I even order it in the office. As a matter of fact, I had a young lady knock on my door about two years ago, about a year ago, and she said she was from Newark, and she was probably a work study type of program and everything, and she asked me if I would take some ads, and when she told me she was from Newark, I said, yeah. So I ordered Jet and Ebony and all the old ones and they come right to my office right now. But that is, and then, of course, a little later came Mohammed Speaks. You know. And that was another paper and was put out on from South Orange Avenue.

Q: In your travels, what was the relationship that you feel between black Newark and other black communities in New Jersey? So what are some of the communities and how was their relationship, what kind of relationship between these communities and Newark?

Marshall: Well, okay. Let me put it this way. Regardless of what everybody says about Newark and some of the others, Newark had a coalition of blacks that did stay together, and they did live together and they did work together. However, as you got out into the so-called suburbs or the satellite areas of Newark, they were far and in between and the people didn't really, a lot of them didn't have an identity. They were like, you know, this part of the black bourgeoisie. They weren't cohesiveness. And, you know, now, the problem is is because they were people that didn't know where they belonged. In other words, they were, at that time, there was such a thing as light and bright. Okay? And there were certain sororities and fraternities in my Howard experience that will tell you that if you were a certain color you would be more widely accepted. As in Piel vs.

Houston, you know, and I won't go any further into that. But this was something. If you, you know, like Montclair, upper Montclair, East Orange and we skip right past Glen Ridge. I was going to stay, too, but, okay. I got some toil out of Glen Ridge, couldn't work in Montclair. Glen Ridge was a town where, I'll give you an example, this is something of the social. If you were walking back and happened to be walking through Glen Ridge, through [?], you know, back to Newark, the cops would stop you and ask you where you were going and what were you doing here? And they would actually put in the car and take you to the outskirts of Glen Ridge.

Q: And at this point you're talking about the early to middle sixties.

Marshall: Exactly. Exactly. And this little town in New Jersey. North Jersey at that. Doing that. I mean, sometimes you'd sit back and say, that really existed.

Q: What outstanding blacks did you meet or here in your time in Newark?

Marshall: Outstanding blacks. You know, like I said I met Leroy Jones. I met, you know, different mayors, different councilman. But, you know, there's certain people that I only met mainly through music. You know, you'd meet them at Symphony Hall. People would come in. Different stars. Right now I can't remember, so many different people. But at the time, you didn't realize how great they were, and they were gigging. Okay? And you didn't realize they were great. It was just like another black. But ten, fifteen, twenty years from later, you say, oh, I met him. Or the Playbill. You know, you went there, you met somebody, and the group went on to become who knows what.

Q: What do you remember about public servants? Do you know any black police officers, fire fighters, or social workers?

Marshall: At the time, no. There were very few black police officers, if any. I didn't know any black FBI agents. I didn't know any black mayors. There were no black. To tell you the truth,

there weren't, there weren't. I mean, matter of fact, I mean, even educators, there were hardly no black educators. I mean, I'm going to an all black high school and I can't remember, or maybe, with that, I don't even remember a black teacher. They were mostly, you know, white teachers. I don't remember any black teachers that were teaching. Yes I do. Music. And that was.

Q: Don Coppitch.

Marshall: You got it. And that's it. That was the only, you know, person that I can really remember at the time.

Q: When you or others, I know you didn't get in trouble or anybody you would personally got in trouble, but if you knew of any persons getting in any trouble, whether it was a teenager or an adult, black person getting in trouble, I mean, and they needed a problem solved, who did they turn to in Newark? And how effectively were there problems handled?

Marshall: At that time, there were no black leaders. Okay? You didn't have a Sharpe that you could turn to and have your problem handled. There was no Sharpe. Okay? You know, somebody that's gonna ride herd. It was like a, even when the riots broke out. I mean, it was just mass confusion. There were no leaders at the time. I mean, there was nobody you could actually blame. However, there was one person that they tried to blame. Which I won't mention the name, and said that it was his particular fault and it was his particular movement. And it was a movement that I felt whites at that particular time did not understand and did not want to understand because of they were ignorant of the facts.

Q: What do you. We talked about it earlier, but just to pinpoint now. What do you remember most about people living in Newark? And that community where most blacks live at that time, how was it perceived? How as it looked at blacks who didn't live within that area? You said earlier you moved from Belmont Avenue to Seymour Avenue and mostly a white, Jewish. In your experience where did you find most blacks living and what was that area sort of, and what did you

think of the area, where the larger cluster of blacks lived in Newark earlier as opposed to later on, 64 when we finished high school.

Marshall: Well, let's put it this way. Let me reverse it and I'll go the other way. And say where most blacks lived, if you lived out of that particular area, then you were considered high falluting. If you lived out of the area, and were looking at the Central Ward, which most blacks lived at the time, you probably would say, yes, I'm glad I'm not living there. Okay? There were a lot of things happening down, because a lot of the black housing had to go by its worth. Either rundown tenements, and they were store fronts, they were projects that were abandoned. Elevators that didn't work. Okay. They were urination in the hallways, broken windows, people sitting out on the streets. You know, and it wasn't totally, it was no fault of their own. Because what happened is that a lot of them had moved up from the south and couldn't get a job. I mean, they didn't have cotton fields in the Central Ward. They didn't have anything. These people didn't have any skills. Because now what were they to do? You know. They could not read a lot, couldn't write. A lot didn't go to high school. So what were they to do. They couldn't go down and take a Civil Service test. They couldn't work at the post office. You know, so, and if they didn't get a job, or, you know, down the docks or loading or something like that, there wasn't much for them to do but to hang out. And as a result, we see them out there playing checkers and this, that and the other. The kids would come past and see this, and they'd say, uncle so and so is not doing anything. He just hangs out, he just drinks wine all day. Then the emulation came about. And the children's plight was already not there. I mean, no self-esteem. Okay? And because of this, you also have to take into consideration, they had started social services in Medicaid, and they were saying, well, you know, we'll pay you this, that and the other. Or we'll feed you. And, hey, if the family and the father could not stay in the house and get support, he was living so his family could eat. So there are certain things that are happening, and a lot of people don't realize it, but, you know, they couldn't get a job and they couldn't get work. And nobody would hire him. What else was he supposed to do? He could get paid more from the state. So that's how the Central Ward was perceived. And what happened is that then the Central Ward was, and the reason the riots actually broke out was because these people couldn't afford to go in the store and then pay the prices. And

the prices kept going raise certainly, that they couldn't afford it any more. And they were being exploited. So therefore, they retaliated and burnt the people out. Okay? But they didn't realize at the time that they were taking their livelihood. I mean, what little they had they were stripping themselves. Now they had nothing. Now they had nothing. You know. And that was like the downfall. And then what happened people started not coming into. See Newark used to be, everybody used to come into Newark to shop and do all their shopping, and you know, downtown stores and this, that and the other. And Newark was a place where, hey, you know, downtown Newark, Saturday, Friday, Saturday we get paid. We're going downtown Newark. We're gonna buy this. We're gonna buy that. I mean we went to [?] . They didn't have malls. They didn't have this. They had Newark. I mean people would come from New Brunswick just to go to Newark to go shopping. I mean this was the place to go. But since the riots had started, the big money started to get nervous. Everybody starts pulling out of Newark. And then the migration started. LLivingston Short Hills, further north.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

Q: Continuing, where did you do your shopping as you grew older, where did you shop?

Marshall: Well, actually, you know, in Newark I still believed in, you know, shopping in Newark. Newark was still the best place. And we shopped down on Broad Street. Or on Halsey Street in Newark. I mean, Broad, Halsey, and, of course, the almighty Bradford Place.

Q: What stores?

Marshall: Cronwell's, Lincoln Road, okay, were the main stops. You know, once in a while you'd go into Larkey's, and most people don't even know where Larkey's is. But, you know, but those were like the main shops. And, of course, if you wanted something really conservative, Wallach's, cause you know our fathers went to Wallach's. You know. And matter of fact, that reminds me, I mean, places like Robert Hall for Boys. Now try to get boys something, you got to go, you know,



four thousand miles to try to find something. You got to go to New York or you got to go Barney's for Boys in New York and pay your lungs out. But ideally that's where I shopped. Branford Place of Market Street.

Q: As time went on, more African-Americans moved into the area where you were living. But from that point and prior to that, cause you knew African-Americans at all levels, how did you get along? The brotherhood.

Marshall: Well, you know it's. It's funny. You say how did I get along? Of course, there are gonna be some people you get along with and some people you don't get along with. There are certain things and certain, and you have to realize that if you had something and somebody else doesn't have something, and they don't want to understand why you have this or whatever, there's a certain type of animosity that comes up. Okay? And a lot of times I found myself defending myself for certain things that, due to no fault of my own, and I'm a victim of circumstances. So, yes, there were my share of fights. But then again, I knew everybody cause I grew up and migrated through the whole system so to speak, and they, I was accepted and knew a lot of people. Plus if they didn't know me, they knew my brother or one of my cousins or something like that.

Q: Other than the white store owners and the whites with a vested economic interest, do you recall any other whites having an interest in the black community?

Marshall: Yes I do. I mean, you know, like you can't always say everything's bad and everything's good. And there were a lot of whites that hadn't taken an interest, a lot of us wouldn't have gotten as far as we. We really, we had, if it wasn't for them. Because what has happened is that there were enough, I mean, educators, at the time that really took education seriously. That Newark was really a hub for education. As far as Wickwake, Southside, and people that really believed in kids and wanted to teach the kids something. And they brought us a long way. I mean they'd, you know, sit down. They directed us. Of course, we had help until we got to the advisory point when we graduated where they railroaded us. But, like we all should go south for the summer.



And, you know, type of a deal in order to attend college. You know, we'll make you smart. We'll bring you this and we'll show you how to take the college boards and we'll do this, that and the other. But don't come to our schools. You know.

Q: I'm gonna give you some names and see if they mean anything to you. And if they do mean something to you, you can say whatever you have to say about it. If they mean nothing, then we'll just move on. First of all, do you remember anything about the Mayor of Springfield Avenue?

Marshall: Mayor of Springfield Avenue. No I don't. Mayor of Springfield Avenue. Somehow that seems like a mixed question, but I can't. So let's move on.

Q: Okay. All right. Here's a name. This person was an early black social worker in Newark. William Ashby. Does that ring a bell?

Marshall: No.

Q: Okay. What about Newark's first Jewish mayor, Meyer Ellingstein?

Marshall: No.

Q: Prosper Brewer who an early black trade unionist?

Marshall: No.

Q: Irving Turner, Newark's first black elected official?

Marshall: It rings a bell. They named a street after. So, you know, it has to ring a bell. But at the time going through knowing, you know, and this is like far removed, that's when you learn about it. But while going, actually being in Newark at the time, no.

Q: All right. What do you remember regarding black institutions such as black hospitals, hotels and banks? Do you remember anything about them? If they existed? Where they were located?

Marshall: Well, you know, when you talk black banks, let's black banks. If you talk black banks, you talk Howard Bank. I mean, you know, and that was like at that time the only bank. Okay? And where was that located? I mean, you know, not Springfield Avenue.

Q: Not that Howard Bank was a black owned institution, it was the banking institution for the major part of the black community I think.

Marshall: Exactly. Exactly.

Q: And how did you become introduced to the Howard Bank?

Marshall: Well, I mean, it's like anything else. This is the bank to go to. You're in the black community, you know, like this is the bank. Yeah, okay.

Q: Do you remember any individual associated with any of the? Well, the bank is the only institution that you?

Marshall: Right. No. The only other. I mean, Urban League was like another institution so to speak that, you know, that you could bring up that had anything to do with Newark. Other than that, in Newark.

Q: Well, what about, you mentioned Dr. Dawson earlier in this interview, he was what kind of a doctor?

Marshall: He was a medical doctor. And what happened, the doctors, even the doctors in Newark at the time, most of them were from Howard.

Q: Do you remember any of them? What particular specialties?

Marshall: Well, you know, you had some of the. Dr. Dawson, there weren't too many black doctors. There were black dentists. Okay? I'm trying to remember, you know, because some of the friends I had, I'm trying to think of what their fathers did. A lot of them reverends. Okay. There were a lot of, which you know, had a lot to do to shape the community.

Q: You attended. Were there any role models in your past that sparked the idea in you to be a dentist?

Marshall: At that particular time, no. No. There were no, there were, I think they had a scale, there's something, there was a few up in the area. I'm trying to think, there was another one on South Tenth Street. I can't think of who it was. But, not really. What happened was that didn't really spark me to be a dentist. The thing that sparked me was to just to be somebody. Okay? And it was the thing like, okay, to become a doctor was being somebody, being independent, being able to help your people and take care of your people. Okay? But that was it. Okay? And a couple of times I might have been off the track in my goals, but I got back on the track. And this is something that in later life I figured that for me, I should be a dentist.

Q: You talked earlier also about going to the homes, you know, and seeing Nancy Wilson. What other kinds of music or musicians or performers could you hear in a home? What did you hear in your home?

Marshall: In my home I heard, let's see, Donna Coltrain to Feloniouss Monk to Nina Simone. I would hear all the big bands. I would hear Miles Davis.

Q: You played violin though from elementary school to --

Marshall: Yes.

Q: --junior high school. And high school you changed over to string bass. What kind of music did you play on the violin and then when you got to high school changed?

Marshall: Yeah. I went from Beethoven's Best Unfinished Symphony to Gregg's Piano Concerto to Tchaikovsky, Nutcracker Suite, you know. A lot of different kind of long hair music that, you know, people look at you and say, oh you know that? Yes, I know that. And they're surprised now. You know. But it taught you a lot. It taught you dexterity. It taught you how to read music. It taught you an appreciation of music. An appreciation of playing an instrument. Okay? I received quite an education from that. As a matter of fact, if my father hadn't helped me with some of the dexterity I have now in pulling teeth. No, I'm just kidding.

Q: In your leisure time, the time when you were in school, you were not involved in necessarily a structured activity, what did you do?

Marshall: In my leisure time, as far as what?

Q: Growing up in Newark? Those years when.

Marshall: Well, I used to Bill, believe it or not, it sound kind of strange, read. Read. And I used to get into reading because from having to, reading took me out of my environment. And I would sit there and act like I was in that environment. And go off into another world. It was like, you know, I used to love my Ellery Queen, you know, mysteries, and all kinds of Agatha Christie. And other things that I could occupy, and I would just sit there and read and read. And, you know, I had a little secretary, what we call a secretary in my house, and you could pull that down, and just sit there and you'd read and read for hours. You know memorize the words in the dictionary. And this is what I did. You know, but, you know, a lot of people thought I was a little strange anyway.

Q: And did you read any works by any black writers? Did you know of any black writers at that

time as you were growing up?

Marshall: At that time, to be honest with you, I did not know of many black writers. As time went on and being related and running into certain people, they turned me on to certain. I mean, I can remember going to see a black repertory theater in New York, on 133rd I believe it was. And seeing different shows and the coming back and starting to pick up books, and then I you know I would get into James Baldwin. Okay? And, you know, Another Country and Nobody Knows My Name.

Q: And this was in high school?

Marshall: Right. In high school. Then when I, and even after going to Howard, even more black writers. Okay. And, you know, you would go. And there are so many. That I would read and read and read. And different things. And a lot of things, you say, well how come I didn't learn that. How come nobody ever told me that. It's because nobody wanted to tell you that. Okay. You know, how come, I didn't realize this. This guy was so great. I didn't realize he invented, you know, this. Because they wanted us to believe that George Washington Carver was the only person that ever did anything. You know, and, you know, that's not true.

Q: Okay. Little question and answer time again. See if you can recognize this. Have you ever heard of the Newark Eagles?

Marshall: Newark Bears, but never the Newark Eagles.

Q: Okay. All right. Were there any other black athletic or sporting events that you attended in Newark?

Marshall: No.

Q: What do you recall regarding the seamy side of black Newark life? You know places, you know, clubs, those things that our parents told us not to go to.

Marshall: What do I? You know what? When you say seamy side, this to me was fun. I found that this was something that was in the roots, inherited from juke joints so to speak. That, you know, was part of our heritage. And, you know, whether people call them seamy or not, I still think that was the soul of our race. You know, and whether, you know, people wanted to call them that. It was like, it was music, it was entertaining, it was fun. It was like dancing. We could be who we wanted to be. You know. And so, you could call it, yeah.

Q: Yeah, you worked in a clothing store, so I would imagine.

Marshall: I ran into every type of person going. And because every weekend no matter who they were, or if they had somebody that they wanted to impress, young ladies. Or if they were going, they had to have a new outfit. So I sold them. Jump suits, triple knits, the long collar shirts, the Italian knits, the alligator shoes, either give or take peg pants, to [laughter] everything. Everything. Mohair that splits down the seams. The mohair sweaters, the button down collars, the desert boots, the floaters, you know, to one buckle shoes. The Stacey Adams, the Old Man Comfort, whatever your stroke. The decaf hats.

Q: Decaf hats. Throughout this interview, several times you've mentioned education in Newark and the schools, but more specifically, what do you recall regarding public education in Newark? You may also want to deal with how well you think the black students did academically, how in your experience were the black students treated by the white teacher or the black teachers, and were black students involved in sports and extracurricular activities? And you mentioned it before, but again, go back again and just tell the black teacher that you recall.

Marshall: Well, as far as, you know, education in Newark, education in Newark was like. At the time, I didn't see a difference in education. I didn't realize in education the difference was in effect actually until high school. High school was the realization of something is wrong here, and

something is wrong with this picture. Meaning not so much as far as the classroom itself. Because I mean, I had just as many whites and blacks in the classroom. Okay? And everybody, you know, took the same tests and everything else. But it was how it was perceived by others from the outside, was what everybody seemed to worry about. It wasn't so much in Newark itself, but it was the outside. How were we perceived? So, therefore, you take a place like Wickwake High School, who was one of the number one, almost the top ten percent in the country high school. It was predominantly Jewish, smarter, scores higher, the best college acceptance, this, that and the other. And it was all about politics and how's everything perceived. In other words, they wanted to take Wickwake and put it on a pedestal. And the meantime, you had Westside, Southside, Barringer, Eastside. Okay? Vying for the same position that Wickwake was in. They were busy, too busy, changing school districts. Okay? Too busy trying to show that they were better. However, the teachers in high school. I thought they were, most of them on the whole. I mean, you had a little, you know you have weakness in everything, but most of them on the whole were excellent teachers. Okay? And a lot of them had been doing it for quite a few years and teaching in Newark. And they were, teachers at that time were really into this. Okay? They were into teaching a student and making sure the student got something out of it. But the difference was is that they were, these teachers were being pressured by external forces for us students to be sent to, when we got out of high school, being sent to southern colleges. They were, it's hard to explain why. You know, they didn't want us to go to the northern schools. Okay? And it was a thing like, they know physically that we were physically stronger body wise, because sports had a lot to do with it. We could run faster. And, you know, not to sound like Jimmie the Greek, God bless his soul. [Laughter] You know, but physically we were stronger. In Southside, you know, you'd have the best teams. Central had the best teams. Okay? Even the Italians were, and Barringer and Eastside had good teams. But Wickwake was a school in itself. Okay? And, you know, they wanted to keep it separate so they changed school districts. And that's, you know, that's what sticks out more, and that's when I really learned that, you know, like, everything is not what it appears. And then the next thing is when I got ready to graduate, and I had this advisor, and her name was Mrs. Johnson. And she taught English, college English. And needless to say, you get along with a lot of teachers, and some it's like peanut butter and chitlins. There's no cohesion



whatsoever. And me and her didn't see eye to eye at all. Ssohad told my father that she didn't think I was college material. She also turned around and used to try railroad all blacks down south to schools. And, you know, I'm not sure whether she was being programmed to do this, or she was programmed from an early age.

Q: So how did you feel about that particular aspect of your experience?

Marshall: I, you know, I.

Q: Were there any black role models to, you know, change your perspective?

Marshall: No, there. No there weren't. There weren't. And what makes it so bad is that you get hurt, and then as you go on, you reflect and you reflect back on certain situations. And then because you go on with life and you trudge through it, and you, you know, there was the next level of graduating going to. And then being the only black in the Engineering Department. And I wanted to go to college. And I said, okay. So now I've taken these situations and I go to an all black college. Okay? A government college that was set up for blacks in Washington, D.C., Howard University. That was set up so that we may have somewhere to go. Okay? And this was where the blacks should go. And yes we understand, and you know, that you're smart. And we're gonna make good and so we're going to send you to good old Howard. Okay? Get down to the university and you come to find out that the graduate schools are sixty percent white. And was twenty percent black. I mean, that the grad had sixty percent and forty percent. Undergrad, yeah, you had mostly blacks. Then you started saying, well, wait a minute. This school wasn't set up for us, but at the same time, how come you got more whites, Jewish people in this school, in the professional schools. So, just a thought here. Then we got to the point where, you know, getting back to that though, you're reflecting back and saying, you know, why are we all going. You know, why are we all going to, you know, Howard? Something's still not right with this picture here. But, you know, why do they all want to send us down here? Can't we compete up north. Then one step better, you get down and you say, well they thought back in Newark you know

blacks weren't that good to send. Then you get a wide awakening. Now you're getting an education socially that you never experienced. You're starting to see the black bourgeoisie from the south. They were smarter than you. And you're supposed to have been from the north, and you always heard that down south everybody was slow and that's not true. Now you're seeing something from Fisk, Hanford, Howard. I mean, you know, it's like where did these people come from? You know, light, bright, curly hair, super swift. You know. And now you're totally, totally confused as a youngster. Where am I supposed to be? You know. And, you know, everything I learned up north is not actually what it's cracked up to be. And you cannot get this experience unless you've gone to a black university. Okay. You run into people, you know, from Pittsburgh or other places, and you get to like them, and then you think, oh, you know, we have a right to be proud, have pride. So why are they taking our university from us? You know, it's like. So, and then they say, did she know, my advisor, that I would go to. See they didn't send you for that. They sent you down there because they didn't think. You won't be able to compete for our jobs and everything else. But they didn't realize that you were going down there to find your roots and come back. They didn't realize that a lot of us would come back. So, you know, it's like I've been on the left and I've been on the right. I went from the whole white elementary school to the mixed junior high school, to the all black high school, back to all black college, back to college that eighty percent white, twenty percent black, to a graduate school that was 99.9 percent white and one percent black. So I've gone the whole circle. And the education was good and I think everybody should go through it. However, today, to tell my kids on which school to go to would be hard pressed.

Q: Each time you mentioned your schools, early in this interview and in this segment now, you used the word they. Could you be more specific and identify the they?

Marshall: Not today, but they. Once again, now there are two people here. No, when I say they, collectively speaking not to sound bigot, but white people in general. Okay? And the, how should I put it. Everything is controlled by money, so therefore, let's put the people in control.

Q: In your experience, what would you consider to be the five most important events or developments that have occurred in Newark during your lifetime here? Strike or elections, a riot or fire, natural disaster. Anything that stands out in your mind, and why and how or if were you personally involved in any of these events?

Marshall: Well, you know, I would say, first of all, I would say the setting up of the Urban League. I think that the Urban League was one of the only places that a young black could go to to try to find a job or try to look. At least they made an effort at that particular time to try to help a person, you know, and teach them how to fill out an application, and teach them how to go and look for a job at that particular time. And that was like basically it. Okay? And so that I would have to say is one. Number two, I would have to say, unfortunately, the riots stick out in my mind. And anybody at that particular time who was around the area at the time, would have to say that it made, whether good or bad, it made a change in Newark. And, you know, when you say change, you know, you talk about Newark and you say change, you know, it's historic and it will be marked down and it's going to be in stone that there was a change, whether it be good or bad. And that had to be a change in Newark. Okay? I mean, I could go back as far as to say that Capone made a change in Newark too.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

Q: You were talking about the five events that had to impacted Newark.

Marshall: I saw everything. Okay, so we had the riot. I'm trying to think of the other in Newark.

Q: The Urban League, the riot.

Marshall: You can talk about. I'm trying to think of what really. It's kind of hard for me to remember. You know, there were elections. The election of the first black mayor is another something that we have to reflect on. And how it had been, and how it was perceived by, as I say, white America. And meaning that, Newark used to be a great town, however, it has gone

downhill. Or that neighborhood used to be a nice neighborhood, but now it is not. Because meaning that black does inhabit it, so therefore it cannot be good. It's just like, okay, you know, you talk about a chaotic state. And darkness is there so therefore, you know, you don't want to have anything to do with it. And therefore you can't understand it, so therefore it's just an abyss. That would have to be another event. I'm trying to think of. You know, I could talk about things like going to School Stadium and our football team, and something in sports that was an event that I'll never forget was going to School Stadium and our football team winning the championship for the first time. Okay? And we beat out Barringer. And our cheerleaders getting sliced from mouth to ear which was something that I will never forget. And the bus being egged and everything else.

Q: Where is School Stadium located?

Marshall: School Stadium was located in a totally Italian area and it was on Bloomfield Avenue. And it was something that, you know, this should have never have happened. And it was another white black clash so to speak. That they, it was an Italian black clash to speak. And it was, you know, something that should have never happened. I remember that in high school.

Q: What was the population of Barringer? You know that Southside at that time was predominantly black.

Marshall: Well, population or you talking race, classes?

Q: Race, classes, ratios.

Marshall: Exactly. You know it was mainly, I would say 99.9 percent Italian. Okay. And that was it. That's something. And then I can think back of, and you've have many mayors in Newark. You've had Imperiali, you had Adenizio. I've gone to Adenizio's son as well as Imperiali's. You know, Rutgers here and there, ran into all of them. They, you know, we were always considered negroes to them, and it was certain areas that they wanted to protect and that was the North Ward.

Okay? And they weren't going to let us in there no matter what. Okay? Another area was down that. Okay. At one time that was total Italian too. You know. And these are different areas that I can reflect on. I'm trying to think of, as far as economic jobs, I'll never forget, and this is similar, and this has Newark has changed. I remember getting out of the Marine Corps, coming back to Newark, and I needed a job. And I remember, you know, I said, well, I'm going to be going to Rutgers, and I said, I need a job. So I went to my wife who was working for Bell Tel at the time. Oh well, why don't you come as a, take the job at Bell Telephone. There is a new position opening up. And at the time, this was the odd lot of computers. You know, I remember taking, that they said, Ron, just take the test. There was a job opening. I remember, they said, okay, you can take it at 540, plus you can go by at Lincoln Motel right across the college, there's another building whatever on Broad Street where you can take this other test. Well, I happened to have a very good memory, almost partially photographic memory, so at the time I took the test at 540 Broad Street, and then turned around the next day and took the test down at. And what happened they didn't like scores or whatever, or too much how you did on the test or how many you got correct or whatever. But I remember sitting at this place, plant, or whatever, and a lady saying to me, I can't believe how, you only got one or two wrong on this whole. And, you know, I said oh. And then she said, okay. We've got a job for you. And we will be calling you. In the meantime, I got to ask my wife, well, how about the job in the computer room, did that ever come through? Never heard anything. Then she went and asked the boss, and the boss said, he did not do that well on that test. Now, it was the exact same test that I had taken. Okay? I know I did well. It wasn't only. I mean, you either know it or you don't. The same test. Next week I got called in for the plant. They took me to Springfield, Route 22, showed me the telephone booths and said, okay, this is what you're going to do, you'll be loading, you know, the telephone booths and this will be your job. And I said, thank you, but no thank you. And this sticks out to me, and this was blatant, blatant as it could be. You know, these are some of my experiences in Newark. These are certain things that will always stick out, you know, and that's one of them.

Another educational story that sticks out for me, and it will be something that tells you about Newark and the people that own it and everything else, and I'll summarize it. I used to work at Lincoln Road Men's Shop, nice store. Irving Goldsmith owned it right. So one morning,

Saturday morning, cause I was working then. I walk in. I don't see anything. And the store is a mess. And I walk in, Irving runs out the back of the store. He says, Ron, we've been robbed. Yeah, obviously. And he said, quick, come with me. And at that time, we had Louis Rothstein, and, you know, Lee Jeans, or whatever the heck it was, and a whole bunch of other, you know, beautiful suits and everything. Quick, run in the back, in the tailor shop. Go in the back, grab that box of hangars. Throws the whole box of hangars across the floor. Grabs another box of hangars, throws them across the floor. And I got introduced white lightning for the cost of insurance. You know, but this was Newark. So therefore, you know, we're gonna take a loss so we got to make it a gain. So, you know, these are the things you learn. These are the certain things you see. I mean, but, you know, you don't take a loss. That's what I got from it. We're gonna take a loss and make it a gain.

Q: Okay, and what may the ways of Newark have changed since you first arrived, your birth, I mean? And how do you view the changes?

Marshall: I don't think Newark has changed. I think it just went around in circles if you had to seek the truth. It's like what we thought was good and what we thought at the time was best, is not necessarily true. Okay? Yes, there might not be as much money in there, in Newark, as it was. Or it might be, but it's just being funneled another way. I have no idea yet. Has Newark changed? Well, everything gets old. Okay? Basically remains the same. I don't really think it's changed.

Q: What conditions or celebrations or events in Newark that you witnessed in Newark in your time, that just no longer? What happened to them?

Marshall: Okay. You know, you have to, when you think of Newark you have to remember, we used to be able to see parades. Okay. And we used to have parades. We used to have like festivals and different things like that. You know, and I don't see that much any more. I'm not in Newark, but I don't think they have those things. That the merchants used to supply a lot of these downtown. The decorations at Christmastime. You know, whether it be, you know, whether you



want to call it Christmas or Kwanza, whatever you want to call it, it's not there. Okay? It's not there. It's not the lit streets. I mean, certain things that you knew it was holiday time, not matter what you think. Now, it's rather than five o'clock. It's flight time. Okay? Light and flight.

Q: Well, when do you feel black life in Newark reached its highest peak and what was great about it?

Marshall: Well, when I think Newark reached its highest peak was in the, I would have to say, and this is from my particular time, I would have to say between 1963 to 1968. Okay? After that, you got the return of the best, you had the return of, you know, it was a lot of things happening. A lot of money being sent overseas. There was a lot of things being taken for granted. I think what happened you had, you know, you had the colleges, people a lot losing houses, you had your real estate people coming in trying to, you know, swallow up Newark and, you know, it inhabitants to build and better, supposedly, schools and things like that. People losing their houses. You had a lot of people had lost their jobs. Okay? You know, it was, or their families. And, you know, it was, drugs were, you know, being. There was a lot of drugs in the city. You know, that was I would have to say the sixties.

Q: When you do you feel black life in Newark reached its lowest point and what was so bad about it.

Marshall: Okay. Well, lowest point is hard for me to say. When does a city bottom out. I don't know. I haven't stayed around long enough to find out. It's a thing like, it was a thing like, either you died with it, you go down with the boat and sink. Which, you know, I take my hat off to a lot of people that have done it. But at the same time, you know, you look at them and how much of a price have they paid for doing it. And it's just a shame. I mean, I've had people being murdered and killed, and for what. And they believe that Newark is coming back. Newark is coming back. It'll be back. It'll be back. Since 67 riots, 76. Twenty years from now it'll be back. It's 96.



Q: Okay. Ron. What do you recall or have you ever heard of Louse Scott?

Marshall: Nothing.

Q: What about the High Street in which the Krueger Mansion or Krueger-Scott Mansion is located?

Marshall: You know, I'm very familiar with that area. I mean, matter of fact, Dr. Shelton, who's also another dentist, has been there. You know. And it's not far from there. And also, you know, the, as far as Krueger, you know, I remember the. I mean, I delivered papers to the Seventeenth Avenue Projects. I mean, and every day I'd see this red building across the way from me. With the K. Yeah, right. Still with the big K there with the guy with the hat and walking, you know. It's like. And Abyssinian Baptist Church was right behind, so I remember.

Q: Did you or anyone you know work for any of the families in the High Street area? Funeral home still stands.

Marshall: Right. I, no, I didn't. Well, Wiggam funeral parlor, I mean, of course, I knew Carol Wiggam and Lamar and, you know, some of her cousins from Montclair. But that was about all, the size of it.

Q: Did you know any of the Kruegers?

Marshall: No. None of the Kruegers.

Q: Did you, and I think you did mention it before, anybody else you know worked for the city breweries?

Marshall: Well, I, sort of worked for the breweries, but did not work for the breweries. He was

an independent contractor. You work as we need you.

Q: Well, regarding your overall experience in Newark, how would you sum up your experience living in Newark?

Marshall: You know, I would never give it up. It's something that I would never, you know. And you know it's hard to explain to somebody. Unless you have lived in Newark, there's an experience that you'll never forget and it's something that will carry you through the rest of your life. It's something that you will always feel that it's in your heart. You grew up and you've seen the city. You know how to deal, you know how to deal socially. You know, you've got a heck of an education. I think every individual should live in a city, whether, you know, for a few years. And it's something I experienced, I mean, even my kids. I would love them to live in the city because you learn how to cope. And because everything is not, you know, what things do appear.

Q: Now that covered that, this last question is if you have your life to live over would you live it in Newark and give reasons why?

Marshall: Obviously I would.

Q: So much fun.

Marshall: Let's get out of here.

Q: This concludes the interview with Dr. Ronald Marshall. This is side 2 of tape number 2 of 2 tapes. And again, the date is August 9, 1996. And this is Bill May and once again there were two people talking to each other here. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW.